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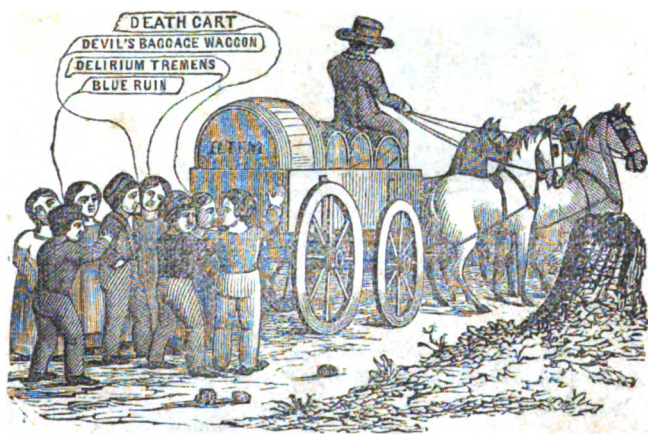
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DEFENSE
OF
RUMSELLING ;

OR



A PEEP BEHIND THE CURTAIN
AMONG THE WIRES.

BY CHARLES DEVOL.

TROY, N. Y.:

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DEFENSE OF RUMSELLING.

"Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion."—Job, xxxii, x.

We have hitherto set up no defense of our business, knowing that "even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise."—Prov. xviii, xxvii.

Jesus when accused "answered nothing."—Mat. xxvii, xvii.

Yet, "he that handleth a matter wisely shall find good."—Prov. xvi, xx.

"Mine answer to them that examine me is this; have we not power to eat and to drink?"—I Cor. ix, iii iv.

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."—Prov. xviii, xvii.

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him."—Prov. xviii, xvii.

One story is *sometimes* good until another is told.

Many win the race by running alone.

A certain Judge, hearing testimony and pleading for the *plaintiff*, was about to decide in his favor; but on hearing the defense he learned that there were two sides in the case.

When was ever a public defense of rumselling made?

We have not been past by unnoticed.

In almost every Church and Schoolhouse in the *land*, we and our business have had our due share of attention.

Our business has been made every body's business.

The *Pulpit* and the *Press* have opened their batteries upon us like old Rough and Ready at Monterey.

Clergymen and Editors have spoken and written against us jointly and severally.

And yet our *faults* have not *all been exposed* much less *cured*.

One fault in us is, that we have said nothing in our own *defense*.

Some, perchance have thought we had nothing to say. *This* is a mistake. *We have* somewhat to say.

AND FIRST AS TO OUR GRIEVANCES.

Our *faults* have been seized upon.

Who has not some faults. *Consider.*

People who live in glass-houses may not throw Stones. But, "he that is without sin." Whatever of good, we do, has been studiously concealed. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. When a *house* burns it makes *ashes*.

It is alledged that *our* business, is a bad business.

We answer, *to us* at least it is a *profitable* business. *We* do not complain. Why do *others*? No other business except *stealing* pays so well. Our business has the appearance of rendering an equivolent, to those that deal with us.

Very many who buy of us would pay *more* for what they buy of us should we *ask* it.

Thousands are so well pleased with the business they do with us, that they will *earn, borrow, beg* or *steal*, the means to *trade* with us. We scarce ever hear *them* complain.

Now if ours were a bad business, would not we and our customers find it out and complain?

Many sacrifice their farms and indeed all their earthly goods, even the *last cow*, and sometimes their *only breadstuff* and their *Bible*, to trade with us.

What *better* proof would you have, that our customers like to do business with us?

Just consider what efforts are made to turn away our customers. Being duly lectured they are kept away from us a day or two, until our influence over them ceases, and *then* during the *reaction*, their names are secured to a pledge to desert us! This makes us a vast deal of trouble to get them *right again*.

Ministers are generally very officious in these matters (we admit some exceptions.)

Sometimes when they can keep our customers from us *long enough*, they furnish them with Bibles and what *they* call religious instructions and get them so completely turned against us that they make it a matter of *conscience* to break off their dealings with us!

In many of these cases we fail altogether, ever afterwards to re-

cover them. In some cases we succeed. And you will please take notice, we sometimes get the *minister too* !

We are very fond indeed of such customers.

It would be very gratifying to us, to be on friendly terms with such men as Rev. *Mr.*—We would gladly furnish him gratis for the sake of his influence. He is about the hardest case we have found, but we hope to *fetch* him yet. We would do almost anything in of our line of business if we could only keep him *still* !

If a few X's and V's would make him stutter on this subject, you'd soon see the difference.

As mattess and things are going now, the best thing we can do, is, to keep as many away from him as we can. He seems to be bent on our ruin. And we take this opportunity to state frankly, that unless he shall change his course, we shall spare no pains to give him such noteriety as will more and more cripple his energies, and all others of his craft.

It has not unfrequently happened when we have made a trade of a few shillings, in exchanging our commodities for a *Bible*, or a *peck of corn* or a *bridal ring*, articles which are often offered to us at half *price*, not being half so highly prized as what they get of us ; these *ministers* and *coldwater*-men seem to be perfectly uneasy until they have told it from Dan to Beersheba. At the same time our customers received all they asked, and find no fault, and would do *just so* again in like circumstances.

Now if I should sell a man the shadow of a Meetinghouse, by moonlight, before witness, what business has any body else to interfere with our trade, or if the man who bought it, should come and complain that he had lost it at sunrise, what could I do more than to tell him that the shadow was on the *other side* of the *house* and so if, at noon, he complained that his shadow grew smaller I would tell him to watch it, as it increased towards night.

Among other things Coldwater men complain that we adulterate our liquors with *cold water* ! the very thing they pretend to recommend ! What inconsistency ! To this we reply, this is not the *worst* thing we add ! If they would find out the *worst things* we do, they must *guess* again !

Another very grave allegation against us, is, that our business

is contrary to the law of *God*. Now we ask what man has the right to execute the law of God ?

It is moreover alleged that our business has not a sufficient guarantee in *human law* ! We answer such guarantee is quiet sufficient for *our purpose*, and as we are most concerned in this matter, we ought to be left to complain first.

It has seemed good to most Legislatures to an hedge about our business, and authorize it in such a way as to secure considerable *revenue* to the *commonwealth*. This revenue we are willing to pay.

Your Farmers and Mechanics pay no such bonus for the privilege of raising Corn, or making Boots and Shoes and Cloth and Paper !

We have to pay duties on what we import, and then pay large sums in Cities to the excise men, and also in the country, for the privilege of selling just what the people *want*, at prices that they are very willing to pay.

Who would dare to question the wisdom of the Honorable's that make our laws ?

When the representatives of a free people see fit in their wisdom to enact such laws, who would have the audacity to question their official acts ?

If too many Coldwater men rise up to investigate such matters, who will vouch for their loyalty, or our beloved free institutions ? Do not the sovereign people elect their own representatives, and do not *they* make the laws ? What will follow if we do not obey the laws ?

More or less *invective* has been heaped upon us. Our justification is *short* and *conclusive*. We have a legally certified moral character. Now can it be supposed that *we*, having a moral character in *writing*, that we pay *all it's worth* for, can be all the while perpetrating immoralities ? We do not exactly like such logic as this, it is rather puritanical.

What business shows more conclusively than ours what *industry* can do ! how *much* may be made of *littles* !

Our *ladies* rustle in their *silks* and sparkle in their *jewels* that we buy for them with the penny profits of the single glass.

Or, if, after years of *toil* in our business amid the opposition

and competition which invariably attend us, we buy *farms*, build *palaces* or ride in splendid *Carriages* and employ *Grooms*, *Gardiners*, *Pages* and *Porters* who were once opulent merchants and thriving mechanics ; the same is *true*, all this comes in the *same way* from *Widows mites* and *Orphan's tears* ! *What is more precious* ! Our associations, as we count our treasures, are anything but uninteresting !

The most valiant Indian chief, is he, who has the largest number of *women* and *childrens* scalps—should you gather up a load of ashes from the burnt district of a commercial metropolis ; who would not say you had a valuable load, the avails of millions !

We beg the privilege to mention another abuse, we have long borne in silence.

Oftimes as we send out our great four horse team with a respectable driver, and they are passing quietly through the country, the children will groan and follow the Carriage for some distance and cry out mournfully, "*Death cart*" "*Devils-Baggage-wagon.*" "*Delirium tremens* and *Blue-ruin* !" Now it must be that this means something. Children learn these things of older persons. It shows how completely the public mind has been saturated with tea-totalitarianism.

A certain Bible agent who travelled Rens. Co. and applied to scores of our wholesale and retail dealers for means to supply the poor with Bibles, received only \$2.00 of us *all*, and then because we would do no more in this way to curtail our own business he went round telling of it !

And because one of our most respectable tradesmen told him that he had bought half a doz. Bibles for rum of poor people who had received them from the Bible Soc. he went round telling of that ! He may be telling it now ! We have not forgotten these things !

SECOND—TENDENCIES OF OUR BUSINESS. .

Whatever may be said of our business, I believe nobody calls it a *small* business.

Our business in France amounts to \$260,000,000 annually, in Great Britian to \$195,000,000 in this country to \$40,000,000.

We command money enough every year, to build and endow

two or three colleges in every state, and a church in every town ! Provided of course such funds were so appropriated, that is the next things. We do this business in importing and manufacturing the most *spiritual* and spirit-stirring commodity in use.

We supply a vast majority of the people with just what they want, and what they will have it if they can get it.

Our business makes no inconsiderable part of our commerce and revenue.

We risk nothing in saying that we command the funds of the people more effectually than any other class of people, or tradesmen in the nation.

Our own native population, born free and independent, will pay us anything we ask them for their supplies : and they do it *freely*, not grudgingly.

We have a paramount claim on the hard earnings of the good people. They meet this demand of nature 1st, and attend to other things at their convenience. For example, they provide *flour* and *fuel* and *clothing* and *schooling* for their families when our *bills* are paid.

We encourage agriculture.

Our country is very productive.

Nobody knows what would become of the surplus produce, should our fires go out, and our worms die. As it is, we encourage the farmer to raise barley, rye and potatoes, and pay him the cash for them.

If we should discontinue the distillation of breadstuffs, a poor man could earn as much in *one* day as he can now in *two*, and thus it would not require more than one half his time to support his family ! Who knows what he might do the other half of his time ? He might *read* and be *wise*, or *work* and be *rich*, and in either case we should lose his custom ! !

Whoever pursues our business to its ultimate developments, will be convinced, that we exert a very considerable influence upon the *masses*, in moulding the *character*, and forming the *manners*. Take a child for example who runs on errands for his father : before he is twelve years old, he learns several things. He can take a bundle of *paper-rags*, or some *old iron* and exchange them for a jug of whiskey, representing his rags or iron

to be good, by the most solemn oaths, without troubling a magistrate to administer them.

And should any person ask him questions which he deemed irrelevant he would reply, "none of your business, damn you."

Thousands of such boys are hopeful candidates for their fathers rank in society. They may be successful horse-jockeys, or volunteers for some Mexican campaign.

Our business is indispensable to success in Masquerade Balls and theatrical performances, Circuses and Caravans and most gatherings for diversion among the lower classes, depend almost entirely upon a liberal supply from our depositories.

Our Capitol at Washington, and most of our state houses have a depot of our delicacies to which our Representatives and Senators resort, where they are inspired with powers of oratory giving rise to many of the lucubrations and intellections for which we pay hundred's of dollars per day.

Almost all the duels fought come off as affairs of honor to our credit.

Cock fights and horse races and boxing matches would be tame and uninteresting but for the necessary accompaniments.

The thousands of *public characters* in cities would be obliged to resort to some other kind of manipulations for a livelihood, and many such places of public resort would be forthwith closed up if we should suspend our business.

Many passions and exercises of mind seem to be peculiar to our customers.

You will very seldom find any other persons who have courage enough to burn a house, or kill a man. Many of our customers show that they are lords of creation, governing their families without spending time to persuade or entreat, using words and blows, sometimes one first and then the other ! They do not like lectures very well, either *temperance* lectures or *curtain* lectures.

I saw a very interesting scene a while ago which goes to show the difference between "skinning and being skinned." My neighbor Mr.——returned to his family from one of our places of business at a late hour in the night. On his way he had very much the appearance of a public officer, they call fence-viewer !

he ran up to the fence on both sides of the street, first trying one walk and then the other, as well as the middle of the street and both gutters ! When he arrived at the door, his better half received him with some hearty salutations and as she was very much indebted to him for special attentions on former occasions, she took a shelaly and paid him down, principal and interest, the children meanwhile rejoicing that their father was unable to hurt them ; and that mother had so favorably and opportunity to pay her debts.— After such an adjustment of their accounts such couples can begin the world anew on an even score ! Such feats never would come off if our business should cease.

Our business sometimes moderates grief. I saw a certain learned professional gentleman stand by the coffin of his wife, having a lovely daughter upon each arm, without manifesting any particular feeling, until unluckily he broke a flask in his pocket containing his rations for the day, which we had furnished him to keep him in spirits while riding eight or ten miles to the grave. When the sad accident occurred, and the spirit was poured out at the altar of prayer and was flowing down the broad aisle and diffusing its peculiar odour through the house ; the poor man looked sad, more because he had lost his *rum* than because he had lost his *wife* ! However he was not altogether disconcerted, he sought an opportunity when he went out of the church to step behind it and drink what remained in the bottom of the bottle.

This case shows that other passions have strength as well as the love of women.

Young ladies should be advised that they cannot always monopolize the love of their husbands.

Nor are our customers always blind to the charms of others than their own wives.

Many a coquette has been unmistakably shown her inferiority to others of her sex.

Many of our customers seem to know they live in a wide world where they can indulge their preferences.

Again, our business calls the sympathies of our nature into exercise toward the unfortunate.

The scriptures say, " the poor ye have always with you," this

would almost fail to be true but for our business.

What a pity if the Bible should fail to be true.

An apostle said, "we are not ignorant of Satan's devices." He seems to have thought it very desirable to know something about the Devil in this world.

Now we do not consider it boasting to claim for some of our customers, the richest experience of this kind.

When our customers experience delirium tremens, they seem to have very intimate communion with the Devil. They see him, and hear him, and feel him and often talk with him face to face! These seasons of spiritual devotion and edification are quite satisfactory to themselves and very convincing to spectators.

Dying christians think they have a foretaste of their future state. It's a pity if our customers should not also.

These proficientes will not need any formal introduction to their master in the world of spirits. It may be they are thus highly favored with a view to their promotion to some rank or dignity in the future state. Being duly qualified they may be raised to a corporalship, or be made captains of tents! At any rate they "antedate that day."

Could we but fall where rummies lie,
And view the gutter o'er;
Not Jordan's stream, nor Death's cold flood,
Would fright us from the shore.
We'd cut our throats,—
For we're called old bloats,
Or leap into the ocean,
And so secure promotion!

While upon this subject permit us to observe; there is a luxury in being gloriously drunk, which to be known must be felt.

No man need pretend to know much about high life who has never transcended the narrow limits of the temperance pledge.

The physical mental and moral states are very essentially changed under the magic power of the bowl.

A new series of thoughts and feelings, and experience belong to such as gratify their appetites.

It therefore of course cannot be expected that the generality of ministers and cold water men have sufficient experience in the deep things of human thought to speak understandingly.

If the truth were known, it would doubtless appear that many

of them were never drunk in their lives. Of course then they can know but little about it.

"Blind men are poor judges of color."

How little do old maids and bachelors *generally* know about parental affection.

"Experience is the best school master."

It seems to be the exclusive privilege of our race to get happy this way.

Higher orders of intelligences doubtless have other means of happiness, while lower animals either have no capacity for such enjoyments or they have such a disrelish for alcohol that inebriation is exceedingly rare and purely accidental.

A hog if deceived and made drunk, appears to know that he is out of his province, and acts as if we were ashamed. He is rarely taken that way a second time.

Our business has a tendency to correct certain evils to which as a race, we are perpetually tending. Every body knows by *observation*, whether he ever had any *experience* or feeling on the subject or not, that the race has a wonderful tendency to *multiplication*. In view of this fact we interpose our business to avert all evils growing out of a surplus population.

It is gravely alledged that our business shortens human life and precipitates generation after generation into an untimely grave and a miserable eternity. We do not pretend to deny this entirely, and yet who cannot see that by this means, we check the evil above mentioned and so give the better class a better chance!

Suppose there are 50,000,000 square miles on our globe which now sustain 900,000,000 inhabitants. Should no restraint be brought to bear upon the extension of numbers, the number would soon be (in proportion to the present population of Europe) $3\frac{1}{2}$ billions or 4 times the present number! In such case it would require an immense amount of cloth to clothe them and food to feed them!

Another great evil exists in society. The love of money and an undue ambition to excel in wealth and influence. If every body should become *rich*, a great many would be *proud and lazy*. Almost every body if left to their own choice would prefer to rule rather than be ruled. This cannot well be, and it might make trouble. The way of the world is, *by sea and by land*, for large

fish to live on little ones. Who would reverse it if he could. Who could if he would? The wisest man in the world said "wine maketh *merry* but *money* answereth all things." Were worldly goods equalized republicanism would run up to seed and we could scarcely have any thing done without doing it ourselves!

We do not wish to boast, but as we are seldom heard, we may be allowed to say, we do more than any body or every body else, to keep people in their proper places, and teach them to respect their *superiors*. In order to abate the financial plethora of the nations we bleed France every year to the amount of \$260,000,000 Great Britain \$195,000,000 and U. S. A. \$40,000,000.

We have fixed a public debt upon Europe of 9½ billions, and upon U. S. A. of \$60,000,000. Such taxation relieves the plethora, softens the pulse, and occasions so much lassitude that the *masses* are *very easily governed*!

If you would only disband your temperance societies and turn to and help us, we would soon bring about such a state of things, that we could get a laboring man to toil for us all day, for a sheep's head and pluck and vote us into office in the bargain!!!

Our business has brought many respectable people to places of honor and trust about the premises of gentlemen. Cooks and Chambermaids, Porters and Grooms, Gardners and Gatemen and others flock to us for places. It is not unfrequently the case that the once thriving farmer or mechanic holds the horse at the door of the hotel for some *upstart* whose father once worked for him by the month.

Our business like necessity is the mother of invention. Our customers have found out that an old hat in the window will supply the place of a pane of glass and will not break half so easy.

It is a fact not generally known that we exert a powerful influence in elections. We can turn the political scale in favor of those who are favorable to us. This is not doubtful with us; we have succeeded admirably in many instances.

Our business has led to the necessity of erecting various public buildings which are an ornament to the country, such as Jails, Court houses, Alms houses and Penitentiaries. The people seem to know the utility of these public works and *pay their taxes* without stopping to ask questions!

We take this opportunity to tender our sincere thanks to the good people of these United States for their contributions for the support of our business to the amount of \$50,000,000 a year.

We have a host of dependents who pay the most servile obedience to the powers that be. Sheriffs, Hangmen, Constables and all Police officers are but the necessary concomitants of our business, besides swarms of Lawyers, Judges and Physician who render their services to our customers.

The good people seem to be determined to sustain us. You will see physicians and nurses in attendance, and the benevolent swarming about the hovels of the poor, each in their turn helping to maintain families in positions where they can continue their patronage to our establishments; whereas but for such acts of kindness they must be taken to the poor houses, and we should lose their custom.

We herely acknowledge the receipt of a considerable amount of goods bestowed as above upon the poor.

We hope the people will understand that we appreciate their kindness to us, as well as to the *poor*.

We have a noble establishment down the river where they *sing twice*, a kind of rendezvous or depot, where many of our customers are provided for and waited upon by gentlemen officers. That Sing Sing concern is an ornament to the noble Hudson. Its massive buildings, show but too plainly what our men and our money can do. Once the place where that flourishing establishment stands was sterile, solitary and wild; now it teems with life and industry. Many a poor fellow who used to live in some little hovel on the mountain side now lives in good style. Few live in better houses. They may lie down at night secure as locks and bars and bolts can make them, enclosed by walls thick and high, solid as the rocks on which they stand, and of which they are built. *There*, we educate men and women in mechanic arts who never would have done much in the world if left to take their own course. Some, who have served one term, take measures to enter upon another. This shows that they are well satisfied.

Should your no license and total abstinence policy prevail, Blackwell's Island, Sing Sing and other kindred institutions would

be desolate as deserted castles ! Thousands would be thrown out of business and would under the necessity of seeking a livelihood some other way. We do not pretend to know what would follow. We presume efforts to secure the observance of the Sabbath would be made : we should not wonder if the old obsolete laws on this subject were revived and enforced. In that case an end will be put to our Sunday trade. As it is now, Sunday is the best day we have. We congregate regularly at an earlier hour than your church folks do and continue our spiritual devotions in the forenoon, afternoon and evening.

On Sunday morning we scrub out the audience room and provide some extras to please young people who call on Sunday. As these greenhorns must be broke in and have their appetites formed, we hand out liquors *sweetened* and *spiced* and in this way keep the number of customers good ; while we graduate the old class these freshmen come in and take their places.

Ministers in passing our places of devotion on the Sabbath are obliged to acknowledge that our places are better attended in proportion to our accommodations than their own.

I wonder it never occurred to these Rev. gentlemen that a little sparkling toddy better suits the natural propensities of young men, than their lessons on selfdenial and cross bearing.

In many instances, the same persons attend both places the same day, and bring from the church to the bar-room such parts of the sermon as are best suited to the company, especially whatever has a bearing upon our business.

While we, as aforesaid, tender our acknowledgments to the good people for patronage, and other favors, granted to us, we claim to have a powerful influence upon the public mind on the subject of religion.

It is perfectly well known that our religious sentiments are decidedly *liberal*.

Puritanism and Orthodoxy we heartily deprecate. We usually subscribe to Onderdonkism or Universalism. In religious matters generally we hold to the doctrine. " Let your moderation be known to all men."

We hold a controlling influence over each other, and all others as

far as we can against revivals of religion and protracted meetings.

We think people ought to stay at home and mind their own business, especially evenings. No man can tell what influence the priests and churches would have gained by this time had we never checked them.

Finally we conjure our opponents to consider, your determinate opposition to our business only prompts us to determinate resistance. Is not this perfectly natural ?

Our cause is time honored. Men have always had a mind to use *God's creatures*. Sometimes we have felt as if our craft was in danger : and several times we have had propositions to offer for peace : but now we think best to continue in a steady course.

Men always have had, and always will have appetites to gratify and love of gain ; *one* will ever secure the manufacture and the other the consumption of our staple commodity.

So long as this two fold cause exists, our business will continue.

Of course you know as well as we do, that the retrograde movements in your ranks, from time to time in different places only inflames us with sanguine hopes of final triumph.

Your movenents and ours remind me of an anecdote of old Dr. P.—He stood in the street, in conversation with a gentleman when a drawfish little tailor came up and sought a quarrel with the Dr. ; who by the by was a man of gigantic strength ; just at this time he was so engrossed in the conversation that he took no notice of the little tailor, who become violent and began to beat the Dr. and as the Dr. took no notice of this, the gentlemen observed to the Dr. dont you know this man is striking you ? the Dr. said “ Why no I had not noticed it, is he.”

This is just the way with us.

The truth is we are like two vessels in the stream attached to each other, each one determined to carry the other the same way.

Unfortunately for you, ours is a powerful old seventy-four, seaworthy, and well manned, going down with the tide and current at the rate of ten knots an hour. Yours is a small frail boat manned by a few inexperienced hands with her bow against the wind the tide and the current. Judge ye ! The result cannot be doubtful.

